

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 11050 210932Z

21

ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 SCA-01 VO-03

INSE-00 /041 W

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P R 210858Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2064

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: BOAT CASES

1. WE WERE SHOWN A MESSAGE SEPTEMBER 21 FROM UK EMBASSY WASHINGTON TO LONDON REPORTING THAT A STATE DEPARTMENT INDOCHINESE REFUGEE OFFICER HAD SUGGESTED THAT TWENTY VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM MS MATHER ENROUTE FROM SINGAPORE TO JAPAN SHOULD BE DROPPED OFF IN HONG KONG SINCE THEY COULD BE "PROCESSED" MORE EASILY IN HONG KONG FOR ENTRY INTO US THAN AT OTHER PORTS IN SEA.

2. BRITISH ARE RIGHTLY UPSET AT THE IMPLICATION THAT THEY ARE "BEST PROCESSING CENTER" IN THE AREA. IN ALL OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THEM OVER THE AVA REFUGEES THEY HAVE INSISTED THAT NOTHING BE DONE WHICH WOULD ESTABLISH HONG KONG AS ANYTHING BUT A TRANSIT POINT WHERE REFUGEES WOULD AWAIT UNDER UNHCR CARE AND COMPLETE RESPONSIBILITY EARLY TRANSPORTATION TO SOME OTHER COUNTRY. IMPORTANT
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PAGE 02 HONG K 11050 210932Z

DISTINCTION IS THAT AVA REFUGEES WERE NOT FORMALLY

"LANDED" BUT MERELY "ALLOWED ASHORE."

3. IT IS IN THIS CONNECTION THA WE HAVE HAD PROBLEMS
GETTING THE HKG TO ISSUE THE REQUIRED REENTRY PERMITS
FOR THE REFUGEES WE ARE ACCEPTING UNDER THE P-7
CONDITIONAL ENTRY PROGRAM. WE FINALLY SOLVED THIS BY
AGREEING THAT THE EXISTENCE OF A REENTRY PERMIT WOULD
NOT BE KNOWN TO THE REFUGEE AND THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH
A DOCUMENT WOULD NOT BE MADE KNOWN TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY.
CONSUL GENERAL AFFIRMED ACCEPTANCE OF THESE CONDITIONS
IN WRITING TO THE HKG ALTHOUGH HE DID POINT OUT THAT
OUR STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS ARE KNOWN TO OTHER COUNTRIES
AND THE EXISTENCE OF A REENTRY PERMIT WOULD BE ASSUMED.

4. AT THE MOMENT WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HKG
WILL REJOIN OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA AND REJECT
SO-CALLED BOAT CASES BUT IF THEY GET THE IDEA THAT THE
US OR UNHCR IS SHUNTING REFUGEES TO HONG KONG THEY
MIGHT WELL GO BACK TO SQUARE ONE AND WE WOULD HAVE TO
START PLEADING WITH THEM ALL OVER AGAIN.

5. LIKE SO MANY THINGS WITH HKG IT IS INADVISABLE TO
TRY TO EXPAND A SUCCESSFUL AD HOC ARRANGEMENT FOR
HANDLING REFUGEES HERE TO A SYSTEM FOR DEALING WITH
OTHER CASES.

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